

tapestries, it's
something like a church only
at times there's much
laughter.

these ears these
arms these
elbows these eyes
looking the fondness and
the waiting I have been
held I have been
held.

SAD LETTERS FROM UP NORTH

she writes a letter every year or so speaking
unclearly of her life, she sags in her words.
I know that she has a husband she has almost
always been faithful to, and 2 or 3 children
who fill her house while her husband is working.

she used to write poems that were good. now
she still writes poems but the poems sag.

I can no longer read her poems and it would be
unkind if I answered her letters, although I
don't expect you to understand this. she signs
her letters "love." many people do this. I am
more careful with this word.

she is dying underneath her life. it was safe
and good enough for a while, especially safe:
afternoons of wine with the literati while her
husband worked at what he did, she worked with
art, she worked with creation.

and now her husband knows more of life than she
does, mainly because what he was doing he didn't
try to do.

her husband and her children are non-existent
in her poems. I can't answer her letters.
I can't expect you to understand this.

THE FINISH OF MOBY DICK

the professor lived across the street from us
and he had some time off and was doing something
on Moby Dick
but whenever he came over
we'd be drunk and fighting

and we'd ask him in
talk a bit to him
and continue to drink and fight.
he came over 3 times
without his wife
and we were always like that.

I moved out finally
and we continued to drink and fight
only we didn't live together all the time.
then we saw each other less and less.
one day I saw her in a department store
trying on a pair of sun glasses.
"say," I asked her, "the professor: did he ever
finish Moby Dick?"

"yeah," she said, "he finished Moby Dick and
he's going back to teaching in the fall."

"don't buy those shades," I said, "you look awful
in them."

"I quite like them," she said.

I walked off down the aisle looking for
toothpaste.

WITH A CLASS LADY IN A BIG FLOWER HAT ...

we have to keep finding new places. Paris is
shit New York is shot New Orleans is silt London
is sour Vienna is a whore's slit Madrid is a pillar
of salt San Francisco is sinking Tangiers stinks
Rome spills old piss Naples is nothing Athens for
assholes Dublin for dynamiters Cairo for crisis
Bombay for bums Belfast for bombers Detroit for
death Tokyo for Toyota San Diego for gonorrhea
semen Las Vegas for lechery New Haven for
Connecticut.

we have to keep finding new places and the places
to find new places get less and less, it's even
hard to find an apartment if you've got a wife or
a girlfriend or a child or a dog or a cat, it's
even hard to find an apartment if you are alone.

we've got to keep finding new places, and it
won't rain and the grass is seldom green and
utilities are up and the dollar is down and
each third person you pass on the street is
on welfare or ATD.

and Paris is shit and New York is shot
and I always wanted to ride one of those
horse-drawn carriages east of Canal street